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AUTHOR Webre, Elizabeth C.
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ABSTRACT

Progress charts are an effective means of dramatizing student effort and improvement in reading and are especially important for remedial reading students, who need concrete evidence of progress. Remedial reading students often need extrinsic reward, and since reading is a complex act, progress charts lend themselves to the element of reward and to the recording of successes in specific reading skills. Student involvement and choice of theme are important in progress chart construction. Charts should be based on students' interests and designed and created by the students themselves using such ordinary materials as poster board and felt markers. Units of improvement chosen to be recorded on the chart should be small enough so that progress can be recorded at frequent intervals. For example, if a child is interested in baseball, the progress chart can be designed as a baseball diamond, with the student scoring a home run for each book read. In this way, the student is rewarded for small steps taken in the reading process and his or her successful efforts are recognized visually. (Three illustrations of progress charts are included.) (MM)

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Elizabeth C. Weber

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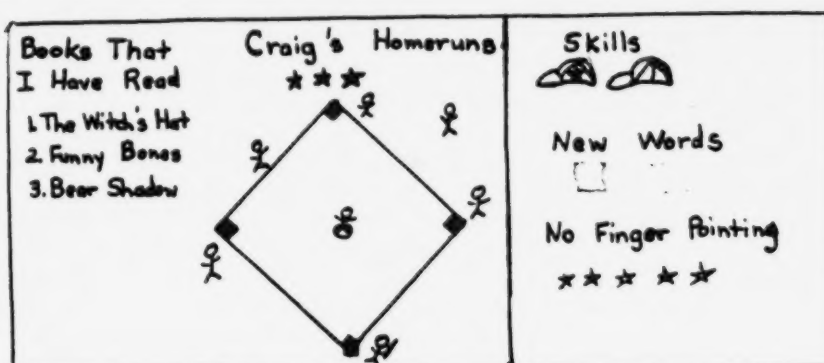
PERSONALIZED PROGRESS CHARTS: AN EFFECTIVE MOTIVATION FOR RELUCTANT READERS

Do you use progress charts with your remedial reading students? Perhaps you should. Many poor readers lack self-confidence and are insecure. Concrete evidence of progress is more important with them than with average readers. Progress charts are a means of dramatizing student effort and improvement in reading. Also, remedial reading students often need extrinsic reward, and since reading is a complex act, progress charts lend themselves to the element of reward and to the recording of successes in specific reading skills. They are a means of rewarding the student for small steps taken and a means of celebrating successful efforts.

Student involvement and choice of theme are important in progress chart construction. Tutors in a recent remedial reading clinic were successful in improving self-concept and attitude toward reading when they utilized progress charts based on the students' interests and designed by the students themselves.

Several students enrolled in the clinic were sports enthusiasts. Some were involved with summer baseball programs. As a result, several tutors helped their students design progress charts around a baseball theme. Using poster board and felt markers, one tutor and her student designed a progress chart with a baseball diamond on one side and, on the other, a skill section allowing for the recording of specific skills introduced and then mastered. Since reading is a skill which improves with practice, independent reading was encouraged. The student moved a baseball up one base on the diamond for every book read. Above the diamond, book titles were recorded, as well as homeruns, which represented every four books read. In the skill section, a baseball cap was added for each skill introduced, and when the skill was mastered, a star was placed on the cap. For each new sight word learned, the student applied a sticker to that portion

of the chart. Since the student tended to finger point, the student put a star on the chart each day he read without fingerpointing.

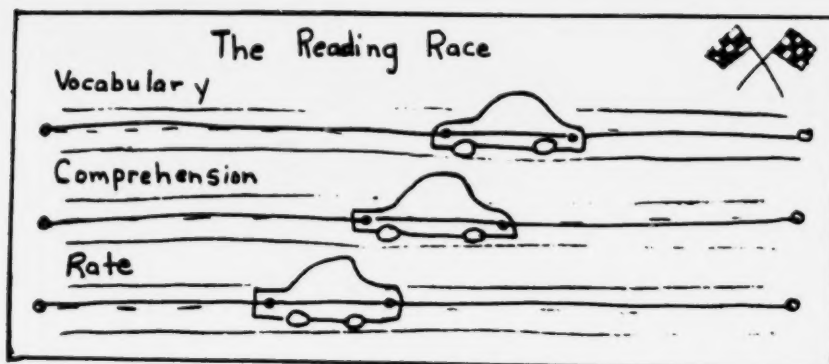


Another tutor and student also designed a progress chart with a baseball field. However, the element of team competition was utilized. One team consisted of members who attained specific skills and the other team consisted of members who read books or stories. Each time a skill was mastered or a story was read, the child advanced a team member one base. For each homerun completed, the student received a baseball card.

Several other students were interested in cars and racing. One tutor and student, again using poster board and felt markers, designed a three-lane race track. Each lane was labeled and progress in reading rate, instructional level, and number of books read were recorded by moving race cars attached with stick pins around the track. At the center of the track was a book stop in which the name of each book read was written. The tutor commented at the end of the clinic that his student viewed the finish line "with desire in his eyes".

Another auto race progress chart consisted of a poster board with holes through which three pieces of thick yarn were threaded. A paper car was attached

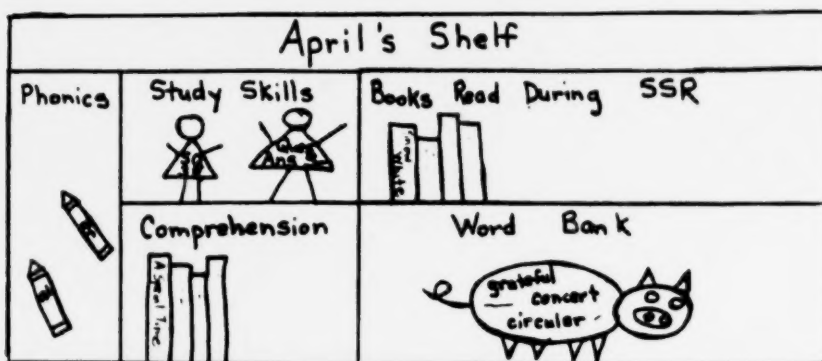
to each yarn piece and as the child improved in sight vocabulary, comprehension or rate, the appropriate yarn was pulled to make the car progress along the roadway.



Surprisingly, a seven-year-old girl enrolled in the clinic was a basketball enthusiast. A chart entitled "Bounce into Reading" consisted of five basketball goals for the five different reading areas strengthened during the sessions: new sight words, new books, overall comprehension, main idea, and phonics skills. After each session, the tutor and the student discussed progress made that day. Then, the student placed construction paper basketballs in the appropriate goals.

One unique progress chart was entitled "Mansion of Progress". During the course of the interest inventory administered during the first session, the student mentioned that she had always wanted a big house with nice furniture. The tutor used a poster board with an outline of a house to represent a mansion. At the end of the sessions, the student cut out pictures of furniture from a catalog and pasted them on the poster to celebrate progress in various skills. At the end of the clinic the student had elegantly furnished several rooms of her mansion.

"April's Shelf" was another unique and effective progress chart. The tutor and student had drawn a bookcase on a poster. The bookcase was divided into sections, each section denoting improvement in either phonics, study skills, comprehension, vocabulary expansion, or independent reading during SSR.



The progress charts described above were relatively simple, utilizing such ordinary materials as poster board and felt markers. However, they were effective in creating and maintaining interest in the remedial sessions and in recording student progress. They were effective because they revolved around a theme which was of great interest to the student and because each was constructed by the student. Although the charts may have been less attractive and cruder than if they had been made solely by the teacher, they served as a means of celebrating success on the part of the student. Units of improvement chosen to be recorded on the chart were small enough so that progress could be recorded at frequent intervals. Also important is the fact that the student was competing with his or her own record rather than with other students.

For Further Reading

Harris, Albert J. and Edward R. Sipay. How to Increase Reading Ability. New York: Longman, Inc., 1985. pp. 332-333.